

Oman to build three domestic airports to boost tourism

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OMAN. Oman is planning to build three new domestic airports to boost the tourism industry in the Gulf Arab state, government officials said on Tuesday.

The new airports will be built in the country's southern towns of Adam, Haima and Shaleem, economy minister Ahmad Makki told a news conference.

"This will help the tourism sector," said Darwish Al-Balushi, secretary general of the Ministry of Finance

Makki said the government has allocated OR17 million (US\$43.86 million) for consultancy studies, design and supervision of the proposed airports.

The government was also developing a modern seaport and a dry dock at Al-Duqm in south-eastern region, Makki said.

A Transport Ministry official said in September Oman will spend at least US\$3 billion in expanding the country's international airport and to build another three airports in tourism locations and in the industrial city of Sohar.

Meanwhile, the expansion plans for the Muscat and Salalah international airports are also on course.

"The Ministry of Transport and Communication and the ministerial committee commissioned for improving the two airports are now reviewing the designs and the detailed maps," Makki said.

Tenders for the new runways are expected to be invited during the first half of 2008, the minister added.

Situated in the south eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, Oman owns a range of popular tourist attractions, including wadis, deserts, beaches, and mountains which make it unique to its neighboring Gulf countries.